Development of roads in rural area

†1925. SHRI SHIVANAND TIWARI:
SHRI RAJ MOHINDER SINGH MAJITHA:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government's attention has been drawn to the report of International Food Policy Research Institute wherein construction of roads has been stated to be most important for alleviation of rural poverty;

(b) if so, what is Government's reaction in this regard; and

(c) the percentage of rural habitats of the country connected by roads upto March, 2009?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) Yes, Sir.

(b) As per 7th Schedule of the Constitution of India, Rural Roads are within the jurisdiction of the State Governments. However, realizing the importance of Rural Roads, Government of India has launched Pradhan Mantri Gram Sadak Yojana (PMGSY) on 25th December, 2000 to provide road connectivity in rural areas of the country. The programme envisages connecting all habitations with a population of 500 persons and above (250 persons and above in respect of hill States, tribal and desert areas) with all weather roads. PMGSY is a 100% Centrally Sponsored Scheme. The Government of India has also identified 'Rural Roads' as one of the six components of 'Bharat Nirman' with a goal to provide connectivity to all habitations with a population of 1000 persons and above (500 persons and above in case of hill States, tribal and desert areas) with an all-weather road by 2009.

(c) It was initially estimated that 1,66,938 habitation were eligible for providing connectivity under PMGSY. Out of these, up to March, 2009, 19,847 habitations have either been connected by other schemes or found not feasible to connect. Out of the remaining 1,47,091 eligible habitations, 61,279 have been connected under the programme up to March, 2009. Thus 41.67% of the rural habitations eligible to be covered under PMGSY have been provided connectivity under the scheme up to March, 2009.

Guidelines of NRDWP

1926. SHRI ISHWAR SINGH: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has recently convened a meeting of State Secretaries for Rural Development to review the implementation of revised guidelines for National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP);

(b) if so, the details of discussion held in the meeting and the outcome thereof;

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†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.

(c) whether the drinking water situation in the country particularly in rural areas are at an alarming point; and

(d) if so, the efforts made by Government to effectively implement the revised guidelines for NRDWP also to ensure availability of safe drinking water in rural areas?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (MS. AGATHA SANGMA): (a) and (b) Yes, Sir. A meeting of State Secretaries in charge of rural water supply was held on 1st July 2009 to review the implementation of revised guidelines of the National Rural Drinking Water Programme (NRDWP). The issues discussed, *inter-alia,* were the status of re-alignment of existing data and filling of the gaps, setting targets for the current year, preparedness of each State to meet drinking water situation in the ongoing dry months, setting up the institutions required for implementation of the guidelines, etc. The participating States presented their status on the agenda points.

(c) and (d) The status of drinking water in rural areas in the dry months and preparedness of affected States was also discussed in the meeting on 1st July 2009. All States had been asked to review the drinking water scenario in their States and also draw contingency plan to tackle the problem. The States that identified problems in the dry season were Haryana, Chhattisgarh, Gujarat, Rajasthan, Andhra Pradesh, Punjab, Uttar Pradesh, Uttarakhand and Maharashtra. The States have been tackling the shortages by supplying drinking water through tankers, trains, mules, etc. wherever required. Pending the passing of the Union Budget 2009-10, *adhoc* release has been made in April 2009 to these States under NRDWP, for implementing the Guidelines and ensuring availability of drinking water in rural areas.

Ombudsman for NREGA

1927. DR. JANARDHAN WAGHMARE:
SHRI N.K. SINGH:

Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government has decided to set up an ombudsman to redress grievances relating to National Rural Employment Guarantee Act (NREGA);

(b) if so, the details thereof;

(c) whether the modalities to set up ombudsman for NREGA have been worked out; and

(d) if so, to what extent the various grievances arising out of NREGA are likely to be resolved?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF RURAL DEVELOPMENT (SHRI PRADEEP JAIN): (a) to (d) Yes, Sir. The issue is under consideration.

Bungling of NREGS cards

1928. SHRI BALBIR PUNJ: Will the Minister of RURAL DEVELOPMENT be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that National Rural Employment Guarantee Scheme (NREGS) cards were found in debris of a political leader's house in Khajuri in West Bengal;